primary and semi finished iron & steel, cotton yarn, fabric and made-ups, meat and meat preparations, marine products, drugs, pharaceuticals & fine chemicals, manufacture of metal and electronic goods.

(c) India's export to Japan has declined from US $ 2006 million in 1996-97to US $ 1859 million during 1997-98.

(d) Reduced global imports by Japan due to recession in the Japanese economy and diversification of their sources of import have contributed to the decline in our exports to Japan.

(e) Some of the steps taken to enhance exports of agricultural products, *inter alia*, include providing assistance for raising small and large nurseries for production of good quality plantation material; provision of soft loans for setting up of grading/processing centers; financial assistance to exporters/growers/ cooperative societies for development of infrastructural facilities; providing financial assistance for improved pakaging and strengthening of quality control; setting up of integrated cargo handling and cold storage facilities at various international airports for handling export of perishable items; abolition of cess on export of pepper, (except green pepper in brine) cardamom, saffron and spice oils and oleoresins to make them price competitive in overseas markets; providing assistance for process upgradation and product development; arranging buyer-seller meets and participation in international trade fairs.

Export Promotion Schemes to counter Impact of Economic Sanctions

3557. DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) the export promotion schemes announced to counter the impact of economic sanctions by developed countries; and

(b) the steps proposed to bring in foreign investment into export infrastructure?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) and (b) Since it appears that economic sanctions imposed in the wake of our recent nuclear tests have had no significant trade impact, no new export promotion schemes, spesifically aimed at countering the impact of economic sanctions, have been considered necessary.

Employment on compassionate grounds in BHEL

3558. DR. ALLADI P. RAJKUMAR: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the guidelines laid down for giving employment on compassionate grounds to the next of kin of the deceased employees of the Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd.;

(b) the details of cases where such employment has been given during the last five years;

(c) the details of requests for similar employment pending with the BHEL, region-wise; and

(d) the likely time frame fixed for their disposal?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY (SHRI SUKHBIR SINGH BADAL): (a) The criteria being followed for considering employment on compassionate grounds are economic condition of the family, number and age of dependents, cause/ nature of demise of the employee, length of service rendered by the deceased employee as well as age, qualifications and background of the applicant vis-a-vis vacancy position, However, employment on compassionate ground is subject to organisational requirements.

(b) Approximately 208 cases in different units of BHEL.